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**\*\*\*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE\*\*\***

## ***Legal Aid Statement on the Launch of Applications for Marijuana Retail Licenses in New York State***

(NEW YORK, NY) - The Legal Aid Society released the following statement in response to the launch of [applications](#) for cannabis adult-use retail dispensary licenses in New York State from the Cannabis Control Board at the Office of Cannabis Management:

“We are glad to see that the Cannabis Control Board prioritizes licenses for New Yorkers with past marijuana convictions, nearly all of whom are from Black and Latinx communities and have been directly harmed by the failed War on Drugs and marijuana prohibition. However, even after the application period for social equity licenses ends, impacted New Yorkers must continue to have a seat at the table, and their needs centered.

We hope that the promises of social and economic equity become reality as the recreational marijuana industry rolls out. Governor Hochul pledged \$200 million to support social equity applicants, but there is much more to be done for a truly equitable cannabis industry and to ensure that New Yorkers who bore the brunt of racist drug laws and enforcement are not excluded.”

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*The Legal Aid Society exists for one simple yet powerful reason: to ensure that New Yorkers are not denied their right to equal justice because of poverty. For over 145 years, we have protected, defended, and advocated for those who have struggled in silence for far too long. Every day, in every borough, The Legal Aid Society changes the lives of our clients and helps improve our communities. [www.legalaidnyc.org](http://www.legalaidnyc.org)*